

Quilters

by [Willie James Jennings](#) in the [March 2023](#) issue

They sat in the ancient place
of the broken and bombed,
the torn and taken, the loss and lost
remembering
the shattering
pockets and bags filled
with remnants captured
by keen sight
able to touch what be not
as though it were
possible to make.

These multi-shaded women knew
their anointing,
the power to join

broken glass, torn hearts, pebbles large and small, bloodstained brick, pieces of those aprons that smelled like fresh bread, flashes of sadness caught in song, the extra fabric from the wedding dress, little napkins, quick melancholies, bunches of laughter, shreds from curtains from soul windows.

Then with eyes aligned,
stepping out onto nothingness,
handling things that could
slice flesh, and pierce skin
they placed pieces side by side
unprecedented, but now
colors and shapes dancing
intricate new steps making
visible pulsating joy
never before imagined.

Then they decided in majestic wisdom to create soft shelter
against the cold, against threat, against forgetting caress,
and as the final threads joined, they saw what God wanted
to call good, but could not create.